

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A media delivery network, which includes:
 - a media server to store content to deliver to a content consumer upon demand; and
 - a digital rights server to store content consumer rights defining access rights of a content consumer with respect to content, and content owner rights defining access policies to the content as established by a content owner,
 - wherein the delivery of the content to the content consumer is timed and the access rights of the content consumer are updated in response to a delivered time during which the content was delivered to the content consumer.
2. The network of claim 1, wherein a delivery control event initiated by the content consumer is monitored and, in response to the event, timing of the content delivery is at least paused.
3. The network of claim 1, wherein the digital rights server includes content owner rights of a plurality of content providers each of which have associated content owner rights defining access policies to the content provided by an associated content owner.
4. The network of claim 1, wherein further delivery is denied after a cumulative delivered time reaches an authorized time duration associated with the content consumer.
5. The network of claim 4, wherein the media server communicates with the digital rights server to obtain authorization to deliver the content to the content consumer, and communicates the delivered time to the digital rights server, wherein

the delivered time is a time period for which the content was actually delivered to the content consumer in a particular delivery session.

6. The network of claim 1, wherein further delivery is denied after a certain position within the media has been reached.
7. The network of claim 4, wherein the digital rights server decrements the authorized time duration by the delivery time to define a new authorized time duration for a subsequent delivery session.
8. The network of claim 4, wherein the digital rights server stores an access period during which the authorized time duration is valid.
9. The network of claim 3, which includes at least one network operator associated with the content provider, wherein the network operator, in response to a request for the content from the content consumer, communicates with the digital rights server to obtain session data from the digital rights server, and the media server selectively delivers the content based on the session data.
10. The network of claim 9, wherein the media server communicates the session data to the digital rights network that processes the session data and, in response thereto, selectively authorizes streaming of the media for at most the authorized time duration.
11. The network of claim 10, which includes a digital rights agent to control access operations relating to the content consumer rights and the content owner rights, wherein the access operations include a first access operation with respect to the content consumer rights and a second access operation with respect to the content owner rights.

12. The network of claim 11, wherein the first access operation is performed by a commerce service provider with which the content consumer has a relationship.
13. The network of claim 11, wherein the second access operation is performed by the content owner.
14. The network of claim 11, wherein the access operations include any one of a rights query, a rights update, a rights registration, a rights de-registration and a rights exercise operation.
15. The network of claim 1, wherein the content consumer rights are acquired from a content distributor with which the content consumer has a relationship.
16. The network of claim 1, wherein digital rights server:
determines an amount of authorized delivery time remaining; and
requests the media server to communicate with the digital rights server after expiry of a time period equal to about the delivery time remaining.

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17. A method of controlling the delivery of content from a media server that stores content to deliver to a content consumer upon demand, the method including:
defining, at a digital rights server, access rights of a content consumer with respect to content, and content owner rights defining access policies to the content as established by a content owner;
timing delivery of the content to the content consumer; and
updating the access rights of the content consumer in response to a delivered time during which the content was delivered to the content consumer.
18. The method of claim 17, which includes monitoring a delivery control event initiated by the content consumer and, in response to the event, pausing timing of the content delivery.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the further delivery is denied after a cumulative delivered time reaches an authorized time duration.
20. The method of claim 19, which includes defining content owner rights of a plurality of content providers each of which have associated content owner rights defining access policies to the content provided by an associated content owner.
21. The method of claim 19, in which the media server communicates with the digital rights server to obtain authorization to deliver the content to the content consumer, and communicates the delivered time to the digital rights server, wherein the delivered time is the time period for which the content was delivered to content consumer in a particular delivery session.
22. The method of claim 19, which includes decrementing the authorized time duration by the delivery time to define a new authorized time duration for a subsequent delivery session.
23. The method of claim 17, which includes:
 - determining, at the digital rights server, an amount of distribution time remaining; and
 - requesting the media server to communicate with the digital rights server after expiry of a real time period equal to about the delivery time remaining.
24. The method of claim 19, which includes:
 - receiving a request for session data from a network operator; and communicating the session data from the digital rights server to a network operator, wherein delivery of the content from the media server is based on the session data.
25. The method of claim 24, which includes communicating the session data from

the media server to the digital rights server that processes the session data and, in response thereto, selective authorizing delivery of the media for at most the authorized time duration.

26. The method of claim 17, which includes acquiring the content consumer rights from a content distributor with which the content consumer has a relationship.

27. The method of claim 17, which includes associating a certificate with the content consumer, and attributing the content consumer rights to the content consumer utilizing the certificate, the content consumer rights being acquired from the plurality of network operators.

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28. A method of monitoring the exercise of digital rights by a content consumer, which includes:

receiving a session request from a network operator server, the session request being associated with delivery of content from a media server to the content consumer;

communicating session data to the network operator server, the session data being for communication to the media server; and

receiving a delivery request from the media server, the delivery request including the session data;

timing delivery of the content to the content consumer; and

updating access rights of the content consumer in response to a delivered time during which the content was delivered to the content consumer.

29. The method of claim 28, which includes denying further access after a cumulative delivered time reaches an authorized time duration associated with the content consumer.

30. The method of claim 29, which includes defining access rights of a content

consumer with respect to content, and wherein the access rights of the content consumer define the authorized time duration.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein the digital rights server includes content owner rights of a plurality of content providers each of which having associated content owner rights defining access policies to the content provided by an associated content owner.
32. The method of claim 31, which includes receiving the delivered time received from a media server, the delivered time being the time period for which the content was delivered to content consumer in a particular delivery session.
33. The method of claim 30, which includes decrementing the authorized time duration by the delivery time to define a new authorized time duration for a subsequent delivery session.
34. The method of claim 33, which includes:
determining an amount of authorized delivered time remaining; and
requesting the media server to communicate with the digital rights server after expiry of a time period equal to about the delivery time remaining.
35. A media delivery network, which includes:
media server means for storing content to distribute to a content consumer upon demand; and
digital rights server means for storing content consumer rights, defining access rights of a content consumer with respect to content, and content owner rights defining access policies to the content as established by a content owner,
wherein the delivery of the content to the content consumer is timed and the access rights of the content consumer are updated in response to a delivered time during which the content was delivered to the content consumer.

36. A machine-readable medium storing a sequence of instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause machine to:

 define, at a digital rights server, access rights of a content consumer with respect to content, and content owner rights defining access policies to the content as established by a content owner;

 time delivery of the content to the content consumer; and

 update the access rights of the content consumer in response to a delivered time during which the content was delivered to the content consumer.